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ABSTRACT

Teachers in career and technical settings are often recruited directly from industry with little or no pedagogical training, which can result in job dissatisfaction and teachers leaving the profession. As a response to the lack of retention and success of new career and technical teachers, a statewide committee was formed in Oklahoma in 1996 to design a system to integrate and align the activities of various stakeholders and provide a high-performance, professional development system for career and technical teachers. A new teacher induction system was implemented in the state's technology centers during the academic year 2000-2001, and an evaluation based on data gathered during the second year of the system's implementation indicated that the system provided a positive experience for all new teachers involved. Surveys were sent to participants in 48 induction teams across 29 different technology centers (response rate of 70%) and 64 face-to-face interviews were conducted. Specific recommendations include the following: (1) increase awareness of mentor training and related financial issues; (2) increase knowledge of team members' roles and responsibilities and improve communication between them; (3) select better mentors part of which would involve the state agency developing a list of content mentors; and (4) school and technology centers should make firm commitments concerning their responsibilities to new teachers and be honest about their expectations of them. (Contains 16 references.) (MO)

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Pathway to Survival – A New Teacher Induction Initiative

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Introduction

Consider being suddenly thrust into a classroom with little or no preparation for teaching or dealing with the myriad of issues that daily confront a teacher. Such is the case for many career-tech teachers. Many teachers in career and technical settings are recruited directly from industry with little or no pedagogical training. These teachers are particularly susceptible to leaving the profession in the first few years. 36.8 percent of those career tech teachers leaving did so because they felt alone, left to sink or swim in the trying, taxing new profession of teaching (Heath-Camp, 1990).

Historically, the major prerequisite to a teaching position in trade and industrial (T&I) and health occupations (HOE) is authentic and recent work experience. The work competence levels in these fields dominate while teaching experience or pedagogical knowledge is only considered desirable (Olsen, 1993). The new career-tech teacher in T&I or HOE programs has a mean of 14.4 years work experience and 58 college semester credit hours. Only 5.1 of those credit hours are pedagogical in content. Of those teachers in career-tech centers that instruct secondary students, only 27 percent of T&I teachers and 50 percent of HOE teachers hold baccalaureate degrees (Mann, 1990 & Olsen).

In some cases, new teachers become dissatisfied as they make the rocky transition into teaching and decide to leave the profession. Job dissatisfaction is described as poor salaries, inadequate student motivation and behavior problems, little support from administration, and the need for more time to achieve expectations (Joerger, 2002). Crawford-Self's (2001) research indicated that new teachers in a Midwestern state left because of family or personal moves, to

pursue other career opportunities, better salaries, and dissatisfaction with teaching. Specifically, Crawford-Self's study stated: "Clearly, more of the T&I teachers in this study left teaching because of feelings of dissatisfaction than any other reason" (p. 50). There were eleven stated reasons for dissatisfaction, with the top four being: lack or support and recognition (31.6%), student discipline problems (16.6%), poor student motivation (15.5%), and poor salary (10.3%). Lack of support was described as an uncertainty about the job's responsibilities, lack of interest exhibited by administration, and administration's unwillingness to provide technical support or disciplinary backup when dealing with student problems.

Lack of support is one of the main reasons that teachers leave their profession. Ironically, one of the best predictors of students' achievement (beyond reading ability and previous grades) correlates to the length of their teachers' experience (Joerger). Because of this, it seems essential that an induction support system be implemented so that teachers are kept in the classroom long enough to gain a command of content and methods and develop a "conditioned instinct" to guide students and their learning (Rubin, 1989).

Oklahoma *Career*Tech New Teacher Induction System

System Development

As a response to the lack of retention and success of new career tech teachers, a statewide committee was formed in Oklahoma in 1996. This committee's goal was to design a system to integrate and align the activities of various stakeholders and provide a high-performance, professional development system for all career and technical teachers, especially those just entering the system. Its mission was to provide supportive services to ensure continuous individual and organizational improvement for teachers in the career-tech system (Warner,

1997). Stakeholders included individuals from the Oklahoma Department of Career and Technical Education (ODCTE), teacher educators, and representatives from local career-tech centers and programs.

Surveys conducted in the spring of 1997 showed some mentoring and induction processes were in place, mostly on a school-by-school basis. Local orientation programs most frequently included assignment of a mentor to the new teacher, providing information about school policies and procedures, record keeping processes and the instructor evaluation process. Items that were least frequently addressed were curriculum development and its scope and sequence, student organization management, and work-site management (Vaughn, 1997).

Osgood's (2000) research of mentors, conducted in the same locale and time frame as Vaughn's study, indicated the assigned mentors had no real conception of their roles and responsibilities, nor did they have adequate training to coach, observe or evaluate the new teacher.

The committee's work led to an analysis of current efforts and a broad review of practices and research across the nation. This review and analysis had implications for the development and implementation of a new system of inducting teachers in the career-tech system. Each of the stakeholders contributed to the knowledge base. This committee continues to operate as a workable entity in the state.

Because of the committee's efforts, a new teacher induction system was implemented in the state's technology centers during the academic year 2000-2001. This system, currently in its third year of existence, is a network of partners working together to create a seamless, competency-based, instructional framework designed to help teachers entering or already in the career-tech system to succeed in the classroom.

System partners are the state agency (ODCTE) and its divisions including Instructional Services, Technology Centers, Curriculum Instructional Materials Center [CIMC], Educational Technology Resources, and the specific Occupational Divisions such as health, trade and industrial and business. Others involved are the local technology centers or schools including instructional leaders, local mentors, and content mentors, and the career-tech teacher education universities; Oklahoma State University and the University of Central Oklahoma.

The objectives of the new teacher induction system are to: 1.) install a more field based, individualized, and effective induction process for teachers specifically recruited from business and industry,; 2.) make the induction process more effective and efficient in facilitating the attainment of standard teaching certification for provisionally certified teachers; 3.) develop a more helpful and aligned support system so teachers may not only "survive", but also "thrive" professionally; and 4.) increase the collaboration among all major partners directly involved in the Oklahoma Career-Tech development process.

System Components

The components of the induction system have included a New Teacher Institute with a subsequent follow-up session, formation of an induction team, and various components and products designed to provide assistance and support. Evaluation has shown some of the components to be more meaningful than others and has resulted in continual change and modifications.

Initial New Teacher Institute and Follow-Up Session. ODCTE had sponsored "survival" workshops for incoming T&I instructors since 1977. Those workshops earned a rating of 3.4 out of a possible 5.0 on a Likert Scale with 1.0 being minimal value and 5.0 being extremely

valuable (Vaughn). The workshops included a three to four day information deluge about certification, teacher responsibilities, advisory committee implementation, safety and liability issues, grading patterns, use of audio-visual materials, curriculum alignment, shop management and career-tech student organizations. When possible the workshops were presented before new teachers faced their students, but frequently they had to attend weeks after they had entered the classroom.

The revised New Teacher Institute still consists of a four-day orientation, but participants can bank their seat-time into college course certification requirements. The four-day session and one-day follow-up held at mid-year equate to completing three of the "basic" certification course credits. Completing the basic course work moves the new teacher from Provisional I status requiring renewal every year to the Provisional II requiring renewal only every five years.

Because there is so much information the new teacher must have, the content of the workshop is nearly the same as it has been, but no longer uses the demanding and overwhelming "sit and get" teaching method. It encompasses Silberman's (1990) recommendations that sessions include discussion, interaction, participation, cooperative learning, and team efforts. Sessions are laced with frequent breaks, reflection opportunities, hands-on teaching experiences, and frequent laughter.

Although a cadre of University and state agency personnel is involved in the workshop's planning, they no longer are the dominant players or presenters. Rather, the presenters are new teachers who have been identified as superior in certain aspects of their responsibilities. These practitioners relate better with the incoming teachers, and show proof that not only can a new teacher survive but also thrive. They role model good and varied teaching styles, and are future networking contacts.

Also, incoming teachers have the opportunity to visit programs similar to their own, and converse with incumbent teachers at a local area tech center. Exploring the programs gives a first-hand look at different lab and classroom layouts, tool and equipment management, and more.

The new-teacher follow-up that occurs mid-year was historically based on a pre-established agenda that covered the same information from year-to-year, with a dusting of new initiative or requirement information. The content of this workshop has changed and is based on areas of difficulties and concerns recognized through teacher-directed surveys or input from field representatives. There are also breakout sessions where teachers share their frustrations, successes and other experiences through discussions with their peers.

Formation of the Induction Team. The induction team consists of a "local" instructional leader, a local trained mentor, an identified content expert in the new teacher's specific discipline, a university field-representative, and an occupational specialist from the state agency. This team is formed to begin working with the new teacher as quickly as possible. The team meets with the new teacher, establishing and achieves teaching goals, provides supportive, observes the teacher's professional roles, makes recommendations and offers praise.

The induction team is similar to the Oklahoma Department of Education's Residency Program originally names the entry year program which began in the '80s. New teachers entering the profession in typical public education environments (i.e., comprehensive high schools) with a teacher preparation degree are provided with a cooperating teacher mentor during the first year. The experienced teacher and a representative from the teacher education university served the novice in an advisory capacity. They and an overseeing administrator would meet with

the new teacher three times over the year -- once to explain the residency committee's purpose and twice to share with the new teacher the results of three observations.

Based on the observed strengths or weaknesses of the new teacher, recommendations are given. Successful implementation or progress toward those recommendations results either in full certification or assignment to a second year when a determination is made concerning full certification (Garrett, 1994). If, however, the teacher enters the profession without benefit of a four-year diploma, as many T&I and HOE instructors do, he or she is exempted from the state mandated requirement.

The new induction system provides yearlong assistance to the beginner, regardless of college degree status. Also, team members are in the novice's classroom far more often, and maintain frequent e-mail and telephone contact. During the school year 2001-02, reports from the University field representatives said that each new teacher was visited an average of seven times and conducted nearly 40 conversations or e-mail communications throughout the school year.

One of the university representatives' goals is to customize assistance for the new teacher according to his or her needs. Field-based support is given and resources are recommended based on the new teacher's identified needs. University representatives are able to help the teacher prepare materials for classroom experiences and complete certification course work requirements. Many competencies observed in classrooms are logged so the activities can be substituted for certification coursework assignments (i.e., lesson plan preparation and classroom presentations).

Another member of the induction team is the content mentor or specialist. This constituent was added because frequently a local mentor does not have content expertise. Though not required to participate in team meetings, the content mentor may be called at any time to

offer assistance and advice, and to observe, or be observed by the new teacher. ODCTE provides travel reimbursement and substitute teacher stipends to allow new teachers and content mentors to visit each other's programs.

Various Other Components. Other components include a self-assessment tool, a handbook and training for instructional leaders and mentors, and instructional modules on CD-ROM covering pedagogical lessons for new teachers. The self –assessment tool originally consisted of some 25 competencies that a master teacher should possess in the Oklahoma Career-Tech system. The original list was streamlined to 13 competencies specifically for the beginning teacher. They included: 1.) develop relationships with business/industry/community; 2.) develop course curriculum; 3.) promote education/training program; 4.) prepare for instruction; 5.) facilitate instruction; 6.) manage the learning climate; 7.) assess student performance; 8.) advise students; 9.) manage tools, equipment, supplies, and materials; 10.) support student organizations and activities; 11.) maintain course effectiveness; 12) perform teaching-related activities; and 13.) continue professional development.

The competency listing was assembled in a self-assessment format and used to determine the individual needs perceived by each new teacher. It was administered at the onset and again at the end of the NTI. The results of the two surveys were surprisingly different although taken only days apart. While some progress is obviously recognized because of the learning gained at the institute, more often than not the information given helped the new teacher realize he/she knew even less about the process of teaching than was initially thought.

The self-assessment instrument is used to assist the new teacher and the induction team to establish the immediate goals to be achieved. When goals are met or more pressing goals are

identified, the team modifies goals and redirects efforts to increase growth in a continuous manner.

The role of the local mentor has proven to be extremely crucial. A mentor's function is to advise, counsel, and guide the new teacher through problems that may arise in the novice's professional life. They also assist protégés in defining and reaching goals. In a study conducted by Osgood, mentors perceived their roles as a teacher and sometimes alarm ringer of school culture, structure, and procedure, as a communicator, as a coach, and as an observer/evaluator. The study revealed that mentors felt fairly comfortable in their roles, except in the role of observer/evaluator which tended to produce many feelings of inadequacy.

Mentors also expressed that as they began their role of a mentor, they had little knowledge of their responsibilities. The vague understanding of their duties evolved throughout the year's process into a self-determined definition. Therefore, it was resolved that mentors should receive training prior to beginning their mentoring duties. The training involved approaches for observations, conducting pre- and post-observation interviews, and coaching strategies. Mentors were also taught the importance of effectively guiding the new teacher into making his/her own decisions by utilizing questioning strategies.

In addition to the training, mentors and instructional leaders have access to a handbook. This handbook contains resources, contacts, timelines, roles/responsibilities, mentor logs, goal sheets, reimbursement forms, and other documentation necessary to conduct and track induction system activities.

Another component developed was effective teaching modules written by a task force composed of experts in classroom teaching and curriculum writers with the state agency. A module covering each teaching competency was developed. These materials were initially

available through hard copies but later could be found electronically. By the second year, modules were available on CD-ROM and currently exist in a video-streamed format on an updated CD-ROM. Each school or tech-center employing a new teacher was issued at least one copy of the CD-ROM. Mentors and administrators were given demonstrations for use in the field.

Evaluation

This evaluation is based on data gathered during the second year of the induction system's implementation, the 2001-2002 school year. Surveys were sent to each administrator, mentor, and new teacher who participated on 48 induction teams across 29 different area technology centers. Seventy percent of those surveyed responded.

Also 64 face-to-face interviews were conducted including 19 administrators, 22 mentors, 19 new teachers, and four state agency personnel or university representatives. A neutral party conducted the interviews to secure honest and unbiased answers. The interviewer was familiar with the career-tech system having worked in the system for over 20 years. Similar questions were aimed at all team members. Items requested elaboration on reasons for entering the teaching profession, negatives or challenges faced in teaching, positives gained from teaching, perceptions of what the induction system's functions and benefits were, and suggestions on how the system might be improved.

Evaluation of the Components of the System

Using a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating a response of "not beneficial in any way" and 5 indicating a response of "excellent and extremely helpful" the following averages were

calculated on new teachers' perceptions of the various elements within the new teacher induction system:

1. New Teacher Institute, 3.96
2. Induction Team Meetings, 3.96
3. Mentoring Relationships, 3.92
4. University Representative Relationship, 4.69
5. Instructional Leader Relationship, 4.36
6. CD-ROM Instructional Modules, 3.08
7. In-service video-conferences, 2.95
8. Mentor and Administrator Professional Development Notebook, 3.25

The survey also asked what the respondents perceived as the benefits of the induction system. These included, "one-on-one mentoring, observation in the classroom, and immediate feedback and input. The system also set a wonderful support system and a good starting point." Other respondents stated: "The induction program allows people to observe me in my class and give me feedback about my strengths and weaknesses," and "helped me get started with my new occupation -- to be a support in time of need. Makes me feel I'm not alone!"

Suggestions to improve the induction system included: being able to visit and observe or be observed by other instructors in the same area; requiring that teachers be in the program a few days before beginning to teach; having more time with team members, especially mentors; and expanding the program to two-years or even until the "basic" T&I coursework was complete.

New teacher comments on the four-day workshop varied from positive to terms like "too overwhelming", while mentors could recall few positives from their own personal new teacher

workshop experiences. One new teacher said, "I went to a week-long introduction process here at school and then to Stillwater for a week (NTI). That was a *whole lot* of information in a *little bit* of time, but it got me started off on the right foot." Other responses were: "I spent four wonderful days in Stillwater, learning through a variety of different people. It was all so new, it went fast . . . I'd like to see something with more time than four days as an introduction to it. Mentors' opinions were not as positive, as this mentor compared his protégé's experience with his own, "New teacher's name went to the new teacher induction, a four day seminar, and it was like a snowball thrown at him, and that's kind of what I went through."

Some administrators had an uninformed understanding of what actually occurred at NTI, what information it covered, where it was held, and even who participants were. The statement went like this: "New teacher's name went to some initial training whether at the state agency or at Oklahoma State University; I believe at the state agency. A mentor went to either the same training or similar training." Another administrator replied, "Most of the comments I have heard from our new teachers is that it's very effective, lots of good ideas. . . Uhm, let me think."

Other administrators were very supportive and were convinced of the positive role it played as this statement describes: "It starts off with a new teacher workshop, which I think is one of the better things they do. That week with the new teachers is the best thing about this process."

Comments about the induction system components and tools ranged from very positive to only mediocre. For example, the mentor training received mixed reviews; "We really did cover a lot of material that helped us in instruction, helped us with new teachers. It was practical and we practiced what we learned. Negatives? A lot of time was involved both in going to training and the meetings we went to (follow-up to training) were not that productive." Another mentor

stated: "The mentor training was probably the best thing I did. The only bad thing, the teacher there talked about grade school. She didn't have a clue about career-tech, but there was so much of it I could use that it was positive for me."

Unfortunately not all mentors attended the mentor training. In fact, three mentors were unaware that it even existed, but expressed a genuine need for it as evidenced by these statements: "I think we got a notebook, but I really learned by more or less personal experience," and "I see a need for training, maybe even some advanced psychology. It's hard to know what to say and what to do and when to do it." Another hoped the mentor training would include "more on listening."

The content mentor was thought to be a real asset by some at the onset of induction team activities, as this statement indicates: "I think the concept will be valuable in the future. I think it's a beautiful idea and really ought to do more with it in the future." Others felt additional content mentors should be identified in case one leaves and cannot serve, as in this case: "I was assigned a content mentor and he bailed out (left teaching) at Christmas."

Mentors, who would be most apt to recognize the need for a content specialist, rarely seemed to realize such a person had been selected for the new teacher. It was evident by this comment, "If there was a way to get more people involved. . .you know, like if they had more than one mentor." Other mentor/teacher duos thought a mentor directly from industry would be an asset.

The Effective Teaching Instructional Modules were tools designed for use on an individualized basis or for team members to use to assist the new teachers in the field. Although the modules were rarely mentioned in the interviews, they received positive reviews when

noted, "Here are some great resources. I didn't get it till late and I should have been using it all along . . . if I was to do it again, I would probably sit down and spend more time with that."

The handbook for mentors and administrators described the entire system's functions and contained resource information, deadlines, time frames, and multiple forms, all indexed and easy to access and use. It was distributed at the initial mentor training session and later by mail. This tool apparently was only vaguely familiar to participants; it was referred to only once in any of the discussions. Moreover, mentors frequently expressed "difficulty with understanding the induction forms, which ones to use and when to send them in."

When asked about recognition of their efforts as mentors, most mentors indicated that there was no recognition or compensation except for a $500 stipend that they were to receive for their yearlong efforts. In fact, two mentors were totally unaware that they would receive even the stipend. None stated receiving any assistance, release from any of their regular duties, or any public recognition. One mentor did mention that his administrator was very supportive, but noted nothing extrinsic had been received.

All mentors expressed an eagerness to participate in the activity, except one. The exception asked not to be chosen as a mentor because of limited teaching experience and indicated, "I felt like a new teacher myself". Despite the request, the mentoring mantle was still assigned. However, all others felt honored to have been asked and displayed pride that their administration trusted them enough to perform the role.

First Year Teachers' Perceptions

First year teachers agreed with every single mentor and university representative when they stated they had entered teaching because "they wanted to make a difference" or

to "give back to the community". The positives of teaching all dealt with making a difference in students' lives by seeing those moments when "the lights come on". The sense of passing along the profession and making changes in students' lives was described as, "You know, it's really neat to get to influence and possibly change someone's life, make their life better."

The challenges identified by teachers could be classified as time issues, student issues and programmatic issues. Time issues included lack of time to accomplish all the needed tasks as well as the time and date a new teacher was hired. Not enough time to do everything was mentioned repeatedly by all participants. New teachers particularly found time to be scarce. The date a new teacher was hired had a profound result such as the respondent who stated, "I was hired the very same day the students came to school", or in the case of another, "I was hired three weeks after school started. The substitute apparently just left them to their own devices."

Student issues included dealing with students' motivation, ability, interest, attitudes and behaviors. Typical comments about student challenges include, "Dealing with students and their attitudes was a shock." Another was surprised that "students don't have the ethics that I had when I was in school . . . they have to be pushed to do everything." This also led to the biggest challenge for one new teacher, "The biggest challenge or disappointment for me was I found out that not all of the students were interested in learning." Other teachers voiced concern about learners with exceptionalities and meeting the needs of all students at different levels. This was stated as "Probably the greatest challenge is . . . being able to relate to or instruct each level of student you have."

Programmatic issues included: locating, selecting and changing curriculum; teaching students to read and use math skills; getting equipment or keeping it up and running; and learning the system and its policies and procedures. Comments included: "There was no curriculum to work with. I never realized I would have to start from scratch," or "The previous teacher left a disaster. No computers, no equipment. No curriculum." Initiating a new program offered more difficulties, "I think the greatest challenge is just . . . get the materials together, especially this being a new program."

Some new teachers were very introspective indicating they were more critical of their own teaching than of the situations in which they were placed. There is evidence from research that shows with induction support, new teachers move more quickly from management and control concerns to instructional concerns (Feiman-Menser, 1999; Odell, 1986). Possible growth was observed when these comments were made, "My biggest challenge was actually listening to somebody's questions. Up until now, when somebody asks me a question, I would just fill in the blanks myself. I sit and listen so that I can understand what they were really asking," or "trying to find a way to present material that the students will understand it, and finding ways to remediate, if I don't get the information across to them."

Perceptions of the Roles of the Induction Team Members

The roles that mentors were to play according to the mentors and new teachers seemed almost textbook in nature. Their perceptions encompassed these; be there for support, guide, listen, be a sounding block, translate, teach me the ropes, show me what

to avoid, help me get started, find resources, network, tell me what I'm doing wrong, keep me from making mistakes, help me become a better teacher.

All new teachers were appreciative of their mentors. None expressed unhelpful attitudes from their guides, nor disdain or dislike for them. In fact, they were thrilled with the things their mentors did for them, the time they spent, the expertise they shared, and the sacrifices they made.

When asked if they could choose, "would you select the same mentor again?" All replied "Yes" or "Probably so", with two exceptions: 1.) "I would have chosen someone more my own age. My kids are older than my mentor," and 2.) "We didn't work the same schedules; we only shared one hour a day in common."

The most common negative expressed concerning the mentor relationships was, "We could not spend as much time together . . ." Usually that deficiency meant time to observe each other's classroom teaching and lab monitoring, but also "we just need to find time to sit around and talk" and "have more access" to team members. Mentors expressed additional concern when they were situated on another campus, had to be away from campus for other activities, or had roles beyond teaching

Suggestions mentors and their protégés made for improving their relationships included; more one-on-one interaction, more time for planning with a set meeting time and agenda, more frequent observations of the new teachers and by the new teacher, appointing a mentor sooner and in close proximity, providing for a back-up mentor, and maintaining open communication lines.

Administrators were aligned in their understanding that they were to serve on the induction teams and provide support to the new teacher and mentor. Strategies for service

were varied. They believed the attitude they displayed "set the stage for an atmosphere of working together." There were extremes from "I am a walk around administrator and I love to be in the classes and I hate to be behind the desk and so I am in the classes every morning and every afternoon. I have it written out, line by line, all the nuts and bolts," to "I'm more a hands-off kind of guy", not wanting to "breathe down the new teacher's back too often, too much." Others were more middle-of the-road, determining they should be in the new teacher's classroom frequently to check on, provide resources for, and follow through.

Most comments from new teachers indicated that they felt they had been welcomed into a very supportive environment, as these statements affirm, "My first couple of weeks here the administration went out of their way to be friendly and, you know, welcome me here and I really thought big about that. They let me know that they were here to help, and if you had any questions, not to hesitate to contact them," and "I felt an amazing amount of support from the people here about being a new teacher and helping me learn the ropes and how to do it . . . this is the most support I've ever had in a job from my co-workers."

University Representatives

During the school year 2001-02, on which this research is focused, there were two representatives involved from each university. Both Oklahoma State University and the University of Central Oklahoma engaged an Assistant Professor in teacher education and one outside consultant in the induction initiative. Outside consultants held Masters Degrees, one having served as a classroom health teacher in a technology center, the other having been a curriculum specialist and a special needs instructor in a career-tech center. All four were female.

Between the four they covered the entire state of Oklahoma, each driving nearly 15,000 miles servicing the 48 teachers. The teacher educators assisted in planning and facilitation of the NTI (conducted three times over the course of the year -- once prior to school's start for teachers hired before the beginners' classes actually began, once in early September to provide assistance for the teachers who began after the school year had started and once more in January to provide training for teachers hired at mid-semester). They also partnered with the ODCTE in planning, facilitating and hosting the January follow-up workshop.

The teacher educators contributed to the mentor/administrator handbook, the instructional modules, were involved in the video-streamed portions of the CD-ROM, presented briefly to mentors and administrators at the initial mentor training session and at various state administrators' meetings, collaborated in this evaluation effort, presented early data at several career-tech conferences both locally and nationally, and attended multiple planning and progress meetings.

All four made field-visits and conducted three formal observations of each new teacher within the induction effort. Usually the representative met with the administrator and/or mentor at each visit and observation. These opportunities allowed the representative to check for possible red flags other team members were seeing, and also to share concerns they witnessed or the new teacher expressed. The latter effort required diplomacy so confidences were not revealed and trusts were not diminished or feelings hurt.

The new teachers seemed pleased to receive assistance from the university representative. No statements to the contrary were evident in the interviews. In fact, the teachers expressed the desire for more frequent visits from the representatives. Typical of comments included: "I know it really intimidates a lot of teachers to have someone coming in all the time, but it didn't

because she always had positive feedback. It wasn't all good, it was constructive advice to help me improve," or "The first time she called and said, 'I'll be there tomorrow" . . . I said. 'Yeah, it's great.' And I don't think I slept all night. But after she got there . . . it was great, come on."

Mentors' input was similar concerning the university representatives: "She makes you feel comfortable and . . . you're not under any stress. The teachers are having a hard enough time settling in . . . they don't need that added stress, that they are so afraid that they are doing something wrong and they are going to get scolded," or "She noticed things that I didn't notice, hazards, things like that. She was an encouragement. Some people just say 'good job', but she explained, gave him things to improve on . . . she gave was really invaluable so new teacher really enjoyed her visits."

Administrators had their opinions as well. These ranked university representative input from the most positive aspect of the induction effort to somewhat negative. The positive was indicated by comments such as, "I really thought the strength of the system was the university support. So I think the support is good, real viable and valuable," and "Bringing in that person from the outside is a real plus. It gives us new eyes to look and new ears to listen for signs."

Other Positives and Negatives of the System

The most frequently mentioned positive aspect was that the new teacher realized he or she was not alone in the process, there was a whole team, and in some cases a whole school, rooting for that teacher's success. One new teacher stated it like this, "It's great to have persons that you can just always call that you feel like you could just tell her anything. It's great, it's invaluable." Others said, "It's a very effective way of helping new teachers and giving them direction and correction without scolding them," and "It's nice to have some people to talk with

and know you can go and talk to or who you can contact at the university. It's nice to have that support."

Typical of comments from mentors were these, "This is a better working process than it was before and it definitely helps the new teacher better understand," and "I think the real positive is new teachers have the opportunity to form links with lots of different people." Others said, "It gives the teacher a team to hold his hand and tell them, lead them to where they need to be. It's just a supporting device for them." Recognizing the growth made by the new teacher, one mentor said, "We got some teachers in their second year that were about where I probably was at the end of my fifth year. I had no help and they (new teachers) had lots of support." Benefits were felt by not only the new teacher but also the mentor, "I feel like it's a valuable program . . . not only for the new teachers but the experienced teachers. It can really help them groom in their profession because we can all use this." One mentor said, "I wish there had been a system like this in place when I was new. If I just had somebody telling me all these little biddy things, I wouldn't have been struggling all summer long, all night, and every thing to make that transition."

Although appearing less impressed than the beginners and mentors with the induction initiative, the administrators' comments were similar to these, "The strength of the system is the personal attention that is given to the new teachers . . . so I wouldn't change anything," and "You've got multiple people working with that new teacher bringing in new perspectives to what he/she is doing. That's something we need to continue."

It was interesting to observe that mentors and administrators agreed on one aspect: new teachers should "ask more questions . . . sometimes they have questions to ask but they are too nervous to ask"; "encourage them to use the mentoring program and encourage them to not think

of it as threatening" and "involve more people so more networking can occur." Most mentors agreed that they would have liked to be able to "spend more time" working with the teachers to whom they were assigned, especially before classes start or before the teacher is faced with students.

Disapproving issues were expressed only 20 percent of the time. Five related specifically to the $2200 investment by the technology centers for each teacher. Although one mentor thought the amount was fair for services given, she recognized that there was difficulty in securing buy-in from the tech center's school board. Another administrator from a school with five new teachers thought it placed a tremendous burden on the school and that the funds might have been better spent on equipment or training aids. Another was hopeful that the cost could be cut in the future. One participant commented, "This year, I've had three new teachers. Two I did with the old residency program and one with the new induction system . . . the process is pretty much the same with the exception of a couple of different forms. And . . . I am the person who must see the value in the $2200 which is the amount contributed per teacher by each school system to the induction grant." A final administrator indicated that the burden should not fall on the shoulders of the technology centers, but rather on the state agency.

The remaining negatives were a mixed bag covering these points: visits, meetings or check-in with administrators too infrequent; content mentors were not accessible; training for mentors and administrators about the system as a whole and mentoring/coaching should be increased; mismatch of mentors and new teachers work schedules; and a lack of understanding by team members of certification requirements.

Recommendations

This research seems to indicate that the Oklahoma new teacher induction system provided a positive experience for all new teachers involved. Although not all components ranked as high as others, all had merit and, with the possible exception of the videoconferences, most interviewees felt the process should be continued. Specific recommendations included:

1. Continue to increase awareness of mentor training, content mentor availability, substitute stipends, travel reimbursements, and the banking of seat time or assignments into college course work. More complete instruction regarding the induction process model needs to occur so that all individuals in the system realize all aspects of the program in order to provide effective service to the new teacher.
2. Increase knowledge of team members' roles and responsibilities. All members of induction teams should thoroughly understand their roles and responsibilities. Thorough orientations to new teacher induction models should be required for all participants. When this fails to occur only fuzzy images of teacher initiation strategies are seen. Because induction efforts will involve new participants (beginning teachers, mentors, administrators, and field representatives) each year, the education process must continue as an ongoing process.
3. Continue to refine and improve the New Teacher Institute. Despite its tendency to overwhelm the participants, the NTI is largely considered necessary for the new teacher's survival. It should be continued, however the self-assessment instrument administered at the orientation workshop should be given as a pre-test to more accurately measure new teacher knowledge. As currently used, it measures only the new teacher's personal perception of his/her knowledge. As indicated earlier, the novice frequently feels current

knowledge is sufficient until determined otherwise in real-world teaching environment. A more accurate identification of the new teacher's ability could better guide the team as it establishes long and short-term goals for the new teacher.

4. Better selection of mentors. When selecting mentors to serve new teachers, a cadre of experienced and dedicated professionals should be developed to create a pool of mentors within each technology center or school. Other suggestions to assist mentors in the induction process include: providing training for all identified teachers so a fully-functioning pool is available., assignment to and utilization by the new teacher as soon as he/she is employed; publicly recognizing veteran teachers who take the step to go above and beyond by serving as a mentor; selecting a mentor who is in close proximity with and on the same teaching time schedule to guide the new teacher; considering the age of the mentor and the protégé, remembering that younger mentors often make older beginners feel uncomfortable; avoiding the assignment of mentors who are already overburdened or must be away from campus for long periods of time and associating mentor training with college credits to require measurement of mentor's learning acquisition during the training. Mentor training should define mentor roles and responsibilities, give more help with evaluation and observation techniques, and teach additional components like listening skills and conflict resolving strategies. Induction team members should be taught to offer constructive criticism and appropriate praise. After all, teachers want to know "why" what they are doing is good or bad to improve.
5. Firm commitments by any school or technology center concerning their responsibilities to the new teacher. Those commitments include providing adequate time for the new teacher to become acclimated to his/her environment before meeting students face-to-

face; adequate time for new teacher spent with an experienced teacher or curriculum specialist so new teacher can begin to develop curriculum alignment for his/her new program; and adequate release time for the new teacher and the mentor to enable both to be away from their classes to observe and be observed. Centers should also identify experts on campus who are exceptionally effective in specific teacher competencies and allow these experts to be used when the mentor feels incompetent, overwhelmed or sees a need to delegate some responsibility to others.

6. Development of a list of content mentors by the state agency. The list should include at least two for each content area, and be published for new teachers and all team members. Other considerations could include: arranging a meeting time, perhaps at the NTI, for the new teachers to meet their content mentors to ensure connection with their specialists and guaranteeing that content mentors make at least one visit to the new teacher's program and that the new teacher visits the mentor's program as well.
7. Improved communication between team members. Outside team members should make concerted efforts to visit with administrators and mentors, in addition to meeting with the new teacher. Communicating any red flags about the new teacher to the outside team member is essential so steps can be implemented to expedite the correction process. Including mentors and administrators on e-mail lists would provide another possible avenue of contact within teams, especially when communicating about observation visits. If deemed necessary by any team member, additional team meetings should be held. Establishing a website so mentors and new teachers can share insights is another possibility to consider.

8. Consideration of time constraints and schedules for in-service training for teachers to not require additional burdens for schools, such as substitute teacher salaries. When interaction is necessary for better learning, videoconferences usually do not provide the communication necessary, either because of technology or presenter limitations. If interaction is not a factor, simply providing a training video would be appropriate and likely much more adaptable to viewing schedules.
9. More honesty on the part of the schools. Those in charge of hiring new teachers should be up-front with new teachers about certification requirements and all of their ramifications, including course work and tuition expenses. Honesty about existing program problems, including the facility, equipment, and curriculum should prevail.

The Oklahoma New Teacher Induction System may be an effective way to move new teachers from the surviving mode to the thriving mode. It certainly shows promise for making the teacher feel more strongly linked to the learning institution in which he/she is employed. This research strongly implies that networking allows the new teachers to embed themselves into the teaching environment as stronger teachers help weaker ones so the entire institution becomes healthier.

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